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Item 4 of the provisional agenda*
Multi-year programme of work of the Commission for 2002-2006

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Note by the Secretariat

1. At its special session held in 1996, the Commission proposed a multi-year programme of work for the period 1996-2000, which was adopted by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1996/7. At its current session, the Commission will be called upon to consider its programme of work for the period 2002-2006.

2. Accordingly, a proposal by the Bureau of the Commission on the multi-year programme of work for 2002-2006, which is contained in the annex to the present note, is submitted for the Commission's consideration and adoption.

* E/CN.5/2001/1.

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Annex I

Proposal by the Bureau

Multi-year programme of work for the Commission for 2002-2006

1. Agenda item 4 of the provisional agenda for the thirty-ninth session of the Commission, as approved by the Economic and Social Council, is "Multi-year programme of work of the Commission for 2002-2006".

2. At its special session held in 1996, the Commission made proposals, later adopted by the Council in its resolution 1996/7, for the review of its mandate and its terms of reference, the composition of its membership, the scope of its work and the frequency of its sessions. It also elaborated a multi-year programme of work for the period 1996-2000 built around the follow-up to and review of the implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development, also incorporating the review of relevant United Nations plans and programmes of action pertaining to the situation of social groups.

3. The Council also decided that the substantive items of the agenda of the Commission for its future sessions would consist of the following:

Substantive item

Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development:

(a) Consideration of subjects identified in the multi-year programme of work, including the situation of social groups;

(b) Review of relevant United Nations plans and programmes of action pertaining to the situation of social groups, as necessary;

(c) Emerging issues, trends and new approaches to issues affecting social development, as necessary.

4. A recapitulation of the Commission's programme of work from 1996 to 2000 is contained in appendix I.

5. For its thirty-ninth session, in 2001, the Commission will consider the priority theme "Enhancing social protection and reducing vulnerability in a globalizing world" and the sub-theme "The role of volunteerism in the promotion of social development".

6. At its twenty-fourth special session, held at Geneva in June 2000, the General Assembly adopted a number of specific mandates for further action by the Economic and Social Council and the Commission for Social Development, including:

- Inviting the Economic and Social Council to consolidate the ongoing initiatives and actions established in the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development, the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006) and the recommendations contained in the outcome document of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly with a view to launching a global campaign to eradicate poverty;
- Requesting the Council to consider, through the Commission for Social Development, ways of sharing experiences and practices in social development to assist Member States in the development of policies to promote the goals of the Summit;
- Inviting the Commission to consider the issue of volunteerism in 2001, the International Year of Volunteers;
- Requesting the Council, through the Commission for Social Development, to regularly assess the further implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly.

7. Taking this into account, as well as the major new initiatives (an overview of which is contained in appendix II) and other related mandates, the following themes are suggested for 2002-2006:

2002: Integrating social and economic policy

Social aspects of macroeconomic policies

Social assessment as a policy tool

Social expenditures as a productive factor

Preparatory Committee for the Second World Assembly on Ageing, second session

Report of the Third Mandate of the Special Rapporteur on Disability

2003: Sharing of experiences and practices in social development

Forging partnerships for social development

Corporate social responsibility and social development policies

Social policy in post-traumatic situations

2004: Improving public sector effectiveness

Review of the global situation of families (10-year anniversary of the International Year of the Family)

2005: Review of further implementation of the World Summit for Social Development and the outcome of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly

2006: Review of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006) and the global campaign to eradicate poverty

2002
Integration of social and economic policy

8. A central overarching theme of the outcome document of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly is the need to integrate social objectives into the formulation of economic policies. In the Political Declaration, Governments acknowledged that there is a growing awareness of the positive impact of effective social policies on economic and social development. Throughout part III of the document, initiatives call for a closer linking of economic and social policy under each of the 10 commitments of the Copenhagen Declaration. It is therefore proposed that the Commission consider this topic, with sub-themes suggested that would provide a focus for the discussion. The results of the High-Level International Intergovernmental Event on Financing for Development to be held in 2002 might also be reviewed.

Contribution to the Second World Assembly on Ageing

9. The Commission acting as the preparatory committee for the Second World Assembly on Ageing will deliberate and elaborate on the proposed outcome of the World Assembly, which will be held in April 2002.

Report of the Third Mandate of the Special Rapporteur on Disability

10. The Commission has the responsibility to consider the report of the Special Rapporteur on Disability on his Third Mandate (E/RES/2000/10).

2003
Sharing experiences and practices in social development

11. At its twenty-fourth special session, the General Assembly requested the Economic and Social Council to consider, through the Commission for Social Development, ways of sharing experiences and practices to assist Member States in the development of policies to promote the goals of the Summit, acknowledging that there is no single universal path to achieving social development and recognizing the importance of sharing information by Member States on their national experiences and best practices in social development on the basis of equality and mutual respect. It is suggested that this exchange of information might focus on important sub-themes in the areas of partnerships, corporate social responsibility and post-traumatic situations.

2004
Improving the effectiveness of the public sector in social policy and development

12. Governments, in part II of the outcome document of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly, concerned with the review and assessment of the implementation of the outcome of the Summit, acknowledged that the state maintains a central role in assuring the provision of basic social services but recognized that in several countries the state is no

longer the sole provider of social services. It has become instead the enabler of an overall favourable environment for social development, with increased responsibility for ensuring equitable delivery of and access to quality social services. Governments noted, furthermore, that this development has increased the need for stronger public institutions to provide effective frameworks to ensure the equitable provision of basic social services for all. They also recognized that an effective and accountable public sector is vital to ensuring the provision of social services. In part III, on further initiatives, Governments reaffirmed their crucial role in advancing people-centred sustainable development through actions to develop and maintain increased equality and equity, including gender equality; markets which function efficiently within a framework of ethical values; policies to eradicate poverty and enhance productive employment; universal and equal access to basic social services; and social protection and support for disadvantaged and vulnerable groups. It is proposed that the Commission consider various aspects of this topic at its 2004 session, with sub-themes to be developed.

Review of the global situation of the family/trends confronting families

13. In its resolution 54/124, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue to play an active role in facilitating international cooperation within the framework of the follow-up to the International Year of the Family and to facilitate the exchange of experiences and information among Governments on effective policies and strategies. It also invited the Commission for Social Development, when adopting its next multi-year programme of work, to consider undertaking a review of the global situation of the family in 2004, the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family.

2005

Review of further implementation of the World Summit for Social Development and the outcome of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly

14. At its twenty-fourth special session, the General Assembly requested the Economic and Social Council to regularly assess, through the Commission for Social Development, the further implementation of the commitments contained in the Copenhagen Declaration and its own further initiatives, not excluding the possibility of bringing together, at the appropriate time, all parties involved to evaluate progress and to consider new initiatives. Five years after the special session, the Commission could undertake in 2005 a comprehensive review and make proposals for further action in this regard.

2006

Review of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006) and the global campaign to eradicate poverty

15. At its twenty-fourth special session, the General Assembly invited the Economic and Social Council to consolidate the ongoing initiatives and actions established in the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action of the Summit and the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006), and to launch a global campaign to eradicate poverty. In the last year of the Decade, in 2006, it would be appropriate for the Commission to undertake a review and assessment of the Decade and the status and progress of the global campaign.

16. It is further suggested that ongoing review of relevant United Nations plans and programmes of action pertaining to the situation of social groups continue to form part of the agenda, as necessary.

Appendix I

Programme of work of the Commission for Social Development, 1996-2000

1996
Review of the functioning of the Commission

Substantive theme
Strategies and actions for the eradication of poverty:

(a) Formulation of integrated strategies;

(b) Meeting the basic human needs of all;

(c) Promotion of self-reliance and community-based initiatives.

1997
Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development

Theme
Productive employment and sustainable livelihoods

Under this theme, the following specific topics were considered:

(a) The centrality of employment in policy formulation, including a broader recognition of work and employment;

(b) Improving access to productive resources and infrastructure;

(c) Enhanced quality of work and employment.

1998
Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development

Theme
Promoting social integration and participation of all people, including disadvantaged and vulnerable groups and persons

Under this theme, the following specific topics were considered:

(a) Promoting social integration through responsive government, full participation in society, non-discrimination, tolerance, equality and social justice;

(b) Enhancing social protection, reducing vulnerability and enhancing employment opportunities for groups with specific needs;

(c) Violence, crime and the problem of illicit drugs and substance abuse as factors of social disintegration.

1999
Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development

Theme 1
Special services for all

Theme 2
Initiation of the overall review of the implementation of the outcome of the Summit

2000
Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development

Theme
Contribution of the Commission to the overall review of the implementation of the outcome of the Summit

Appendix II

Overview of new initiatives

The new initiatives highlighted below are presented in the order they appear in the outcome document of the special session. Several of the initiatives relate to more than one commitment.

An enabling environment

- Institute systems for assessing and monitoring the social impact of macroeconomic policies, particularly in response to financial crises and in the design of reform programmes.
- Develop national and regional guidelines for assessing the social and economic cost of unemployment and poverty, based on broad definitions of efficiency and productivity.
- Request the Economic and Social Council/ Commission on Social Development to consider ways of sharing experiences and best practices in social development to promote the goals of the Summit.
- Improve access to the global trading system for developing countries and countries with economies in transition through, inter alia, furthering the process of accession to the World Trade Organization and providing technical assistance (bilaterally and as well as through the World Trade Organization, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the International Trade Centre) in participating in international trade negotiations.
- Reduce the negative social and economic impacts of international financial turbulence through, inter alia, consideration of a temporary debt standstill to reduce volatility of short-term capital flows, provision of technical assistance to strengthen domestic capital markets, protection of basic social services such as health and education, and strengthening of national consultations with civil society in economic policy formulation.
- Enhance participation of developing countries and countries with economies in transition in international economic decision-making processes, including ensuring transparency and accountability of the international financial institutions to promote social development goals in their policies and programmes.
- Endorse the speedy implementation of the Cologne debt-relief initiative and the enhanced heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC) initiative and the principle that funds saved should be allocated to social development.
- Encourage corporate social responsibility by promoting corporate awareness, providing an enabling and stimulating environment and enhancing national partnerships.
- Consider measures to minimize the social and humanitarian impact of sanctions.

Poverty eradication

- Reduce the proportion of people living in extreme poverty by one half by the year 2015.
- Develop and implement pro-poor growth strategies.

Full employment

- Share best practices on social protection systems, including exploring means of protecting vulnerable, unprotected and uninsured groups (through technical assistance from the International Labour Organization (ILO)) and mechanisms to ensure the sustainability of these systems in light of ageing populations and unemployment.
- Reassess macroeconomic policies to balance goals of employment-generation and poverty reduction with low inflation rates.
- Ensure social dialogue through effective representation of workers' and employers' organizations in the development of social policies.
- Elaborate a coherent and coordinated international strategy on employment.
- Exchange best practices in the field of employment policies.

- Ratify and fully implement ILO Conventions on basic workers' rights.
- Improve collection and analysis of basic employment data, including the informal, agricultural and informal sectors, and explore means of measuring unremunerated work.

Social integration

- Exchange national experience and best practice in policies and programmes on ageing.
- Support research on the actual and projected situation of older persons to contribute to the Second World Assembly on Ageing.
- Strengthen organizations and mechanisms working for the prevention and peaceful resolution of conflicts.
- Strengthen the capability of relevant United Nations bodies to promote social integration in post-conflict management strategies and activities, including addressing recovery from traumatic stress.

Gender equality

- Ensure gender mainstreaming in the implementation of the outcome of the Summit and the further initiatives adopted at the special session, inter alia, through the use of positive or affirmative action.

Education and health

- Reaffirm the Dakar Framework for Action: Education for All: Meeting our Collective Commitments, adopted at the World Education Forum in Dakar, and recognize that the achievement of this goal requires additional financial support, official development assistance (ODA) and debt relief in the order of $8 billion a year.
- Enhance national measures to prevent and protect against human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) infection and address the consequences of HIV/AIDS transmission, including: strengthening of health-care services, improving information and education, training health-care providers, addressing mother-to-child transmission, analysing the political, social and economic aspects of HIV/AIDS, and providing social and educational support to affected groups.
- Mobilize commercial enterprises to invest in research aimed providing affordable remedies for diseases that particularly afflict people in developing countries.
- Recognize the critical importance of access to essential medicines at affordable prices, and acknowledge the contribution of intellectual property rights to promoting research, development and distribution of drugs.
- Analyse the consequences of agreements on trade in health services.
- Monitor and analyse the pharmaceutical and health implications of relevant international agreements, including trade agreements.
- Invite organizations of the United Nations system to integrate the health dimension into their policies and programmes.

Africa and the least developed countries

- Consider the establishment of a world solidarity fund.
- Encourage the 25 African countries most affected by HIV/AIDS to adopt time-bound targets for reducing infection levels, such as a 25 per cent reduction among young people by the year 2005.

Structural adjustment programmes

- Ensure that adjustment programmes to address economic crises do not lead to decreasing economic activity or sharp cuts in social spending.

Resources

- Establish guidelines for policies aimed at generating domestic revenue for social policies and programmes, including in areas such as the broadening of the tax base, the efficiency of tax administration, new sources of revenue, and public borrowing.
- Mobilize new and additional resources for social development at the national level by extending access to microcredit, supporting mechanisms for

community contracting of labour-based works, improving national tax regimes and reducing tax evasion, and preventing corruption, bribery, money-laundering and illegal transfer of funds.

- Mobilize new and additional resources for social development at the international level through international cooperation in tax matters, exploration of methods for taxation of multinational corporations, combating the use of tax shelters and tax havens, mechanisms for stabilizing commodity price earnings, prevention of tax avoidance, increase in public and private flows to developing countries, rigorous analysis of new and innovative sources of funding for social development and promotion of micro- and small enterprise sectors.

International cooperation

- Strengthen the Economic and Social Council in its coordination of follow-up to the United Nations conferences and summits by fostering a closer working relationship with the funds and programmes and specialized agencies and cooperation with the Bretton Woods institutions.
- Adopt legislative measures and expand awareness by parliamentarians to implement the outcome of the Summit and the further initiatives adopted at the special session.
- Invite the Economic and Social Council to launch a global campaign to eradicate poverty.
- Request the Economic and Social Council Commission for Social Development to regularly assess the implementation of the outcome of the Summit and the special session.